

Robert S. Ford, Ambassador (ret)

Ambassador Robert S. Ford served thirty years in the State Department and Peace Corps, finishing his career as the U.S. Ambassador to Syria from 2011 to 2014. For his leadership of the American Embassy in Damascus he received a Presidential Honor award, and for his work on Syria he received the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Award, the U.S. Department of State's highest award. For his stout defense of human rights in Syria, in 2012 he received from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston the annual Profile in Courage award.

Ford also served as the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria (2006-2008) where he boosted bilateral cooperation in fields such as education and rule of law.

He served three times in Iraq between 2003 and 2010, including as the Ambassador's senior political advisor during the tumultuous elections and stand-up of the new, permanent Iraqi government 2004-2006. Later, as Deputy Ambassador in Iraq 2008-2010 he assembled a government team that devised the logistical and security plans the new Obama administration used to establish our diplomatic posts in Iraq now.

As Deputy Ambassador in Bahrain 2001-2003 Ford led the Embassy team that helped negotiate the free trade agreement with Bahrain, the first of free trade deal with a Persian Gulf state. Ford also served in Cameroon, in Algeria 1994-1997 during the civil war there, in Egypt and Turkey and in domestic assignments at the U.S. Department of State in Washington. He started his career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco. He speaks fluent Arabic and French. Ford has a B.A. from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and an M.A. from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington.

Ford is now a resident scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington and teaches at Johns Hopkins University. He has appeared on CNN, PBS, Fox News, the BBC and Arab networks. His

wife, Alison Barkley, is also a Foreign Service Officer, and they make their home in Baltimore where they are avid fans of local theater, classical music and the Baltimore Orioles.

Recent Public Speaking Engagements

March 2013

Tufts University Institute for Global Leadership Symposium on the Middle East

April 2013

Baltimore Council on Foreign Relations

Milken Global Forum (on a panel with former British PM Tony Blair)

Los Angeles World Affairs Council

Pacific World Forum (in Los Angeles)

May 2013

Connecticut World Affairs Council

EU-Washington Forum annual conference (in Washington)

